

U.S. P.N. 09/577,909

13
PATENT T.D.
08/25/04

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant: Gabriel J. Hall et al. Examiner: England, David E.
Serial No.: 09/577,909 Group Art Unit: 2143
Filed: May 24, 2000 Docket No.: MS149405.1/40062.173US01
Title: SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR SENDING A WEB PAGE VIA
ELECTRONIC MAIL

CERTIFICATE UNDER 37 CFR 1.10:

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By: 

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REPLY BRIEF TO THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

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Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.193(b), this reply brief is presented in response to the Examiner's Answer mailed June 16, 2004. The current appeal relates to the Final Rejection of claims 1-35 in the above identified application under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) and §103(a).

The Reply Brief is filed in triplicate. No fee is believed to be required for the submission of the present Reply Brief. However, please charge any necessary fees to Merchant & Gould P.C., Deposit Account No. 13-2725.

I. The Examiner's Answer Misinterprets the Primary Cited Reference (Mantha et al.)

The Examiner's Answer accurately summarizes the arguments made by both the Applicant and the Examiner leading up to the present appeal. Namely, the Examiner restates his argument that the Mantha et al. patent (U.S.P.N. 6,163,779) teaches packing a web page along with its resource files into a single attachment file. However, the Examiner continues to

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misinterpret the single paragraph relied upon for this § 102 (e) rejection. In particular, the Examiner's Answer again focuses on the paragraph found at col. 13, lines 40-47 of Mantha et al. which states:

The file directory for the copied pages (e.g., c:\user\copies\c1\c1.htm, i1.jpg, etc.)) is self-contained and needs no other files or system dependent information to view the copied page. As a result, the invention may be used with an e-mail application to simplify the transfer of the saved web page. In particular, the user simply attaches a copy of the directory contents to the email and all embedded files get transferred. (Emphasis added by Examiner.)

In response to the Applicant's argument in the Appeal Brief that Mantha et al. does not disclose or suggest packing all the required documents into a **single file** for attachment to an email note (but rather only describes the prior art technique of separately attaching all the files contained in a directory), the Examiner's Answer repeatedly cites the above paragraph and draws the following incorrect conclusion at p. 13 of the Examiner's Answer:

Note that the file directory is self-contained and need [sic] no other files. Having a file, such as a type of directory, being self-contained would mean that there **is only one file that has all the files** it needs to view the web page. Therefore, having all the files in the file directory, which is a type of file, and having said file directory being self-contained, would read on the claim language of "packing these separate and distinct files into a **single file** as recited in the pending claims." (Emphasis added by Examiner.)

The Examiner is plainly confusing the "single attachment file" described and claimed in the present application with a common file directory that is used to store multiple files. The present application clearly distinguishes the recited "single attachment file" from a conventional directory. Indeed, as described below, it is typically necessary to preserve an internal directory structure when transferring a saved web page, and thus the recited "single attachment file" preferably comprises an MHTML file or another "single file format capable of maintaining a folder structure." See the Application at page 16, lines 26-32.

In order to better understand the current invention, it is helpful to understand the prior art. Generally, a web page typically comprises a collection of files (e.g., a main HTML file and a number of linked or embedded files) stored in a directory. When viewed by a user with a web browser, the user is accessing the files stored in a directory on a web server. However, when a user saves a web page to a client machine in order to browse the web page offline (which is the

essence of the Mantha et al. patent), those same files (i.e., the main HTML file and the collection of embedded files) are saved in a directory on the client machine. As noted in the above quote from Mantha et al., this directory is “self-contained” in that it contains all the files needed to view the copied web page. However, this directory does **not** constitute a “single attachment file” as recited in claim 1 of the present application since the directory cannot be attached to an email message (as described below). Indeed, Mantha does not disclose or suggest that the copied web page is saved or packed into a single file. Instead, Mantha simply recognizes that, once the web page files have all been saved in a single directory, it is a relatively simple matter to attach “a copy of the directory contents to the e-mail” so that all of the embedded files get transferred.

The statement in the Examiner’s Answer that a file directory “is a type of file” and thus the “self-contained” directory described in Mantha “would read on the claim language” of the present application demonstrates the fundamental misunderstanding at work in this appeal.¹ A directory containing a number of web page files does not constitute a “single attachment file” as defined and claimed in the present application. Specifically, claim 1 recites packing the selected web page and at least one resource file into a “single attachment file.” Furthermore, the specification notes that the packing step creates a single file that “permits the web page to be stored with its resource files, such that the folder structure is maintained.” Page 10, lines 21-23. Thus, the present application relates to packing all the web page files into a single attachment file and specifically distinguishes the teaching of Mantha et al. when it notes that “no currently available email client supports attaching a folder to an email note.” (Application at page 2, lines 11-12.)

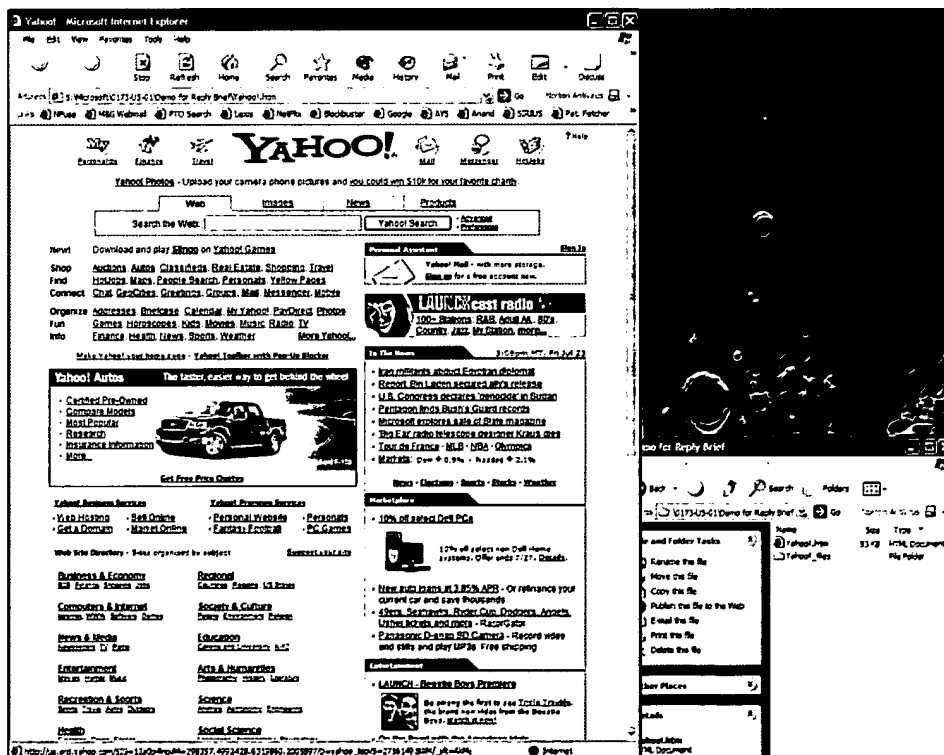
While the above arguments are presented in greater detail in Applicant’s opening brief, the Examiner’s continued reliance on the Mantha et al. disclosure indicates that a further illustration of the differences between the present invention and the disclosure of Mantha et al. would be helpful. The following section utilizes a number of exemplary screenshots to better illustrate the difference between Mantha and the claimed invention.

¹ The Examiner also appears to take issue with the Applicant’s “Summary of the Invention” by citing a portion of the specification (at page 2 of the Examiner’s Answer) that does not relate to the claimed invention. Rather, the cited portion of the specification (page 10, lines 12-15) only describes a prior art process of emailing a main HTML file as opposed to emailing an entire web page (i.e., a main file and attached resource files) as recited in the claims.

II. Description of Attaching a Web Page to an E-mail in the Prior Art

Although the description in Mantha et al. of copying a web page to a client's local storage relates to a particular "web appliance," Mantha specifically states that the "web appliance" should be broadly construed to cover any machine in which a browser application is associated with a display monitor. See col. 13, lines 24-31. Thus, the following description, although shown on a conventional Windows® computer, provides an explanation of the statement within Mantha et al. that a user may attach "a copy of the directory contents to the e-mail" in order to transfer all embedded files with the web page.²

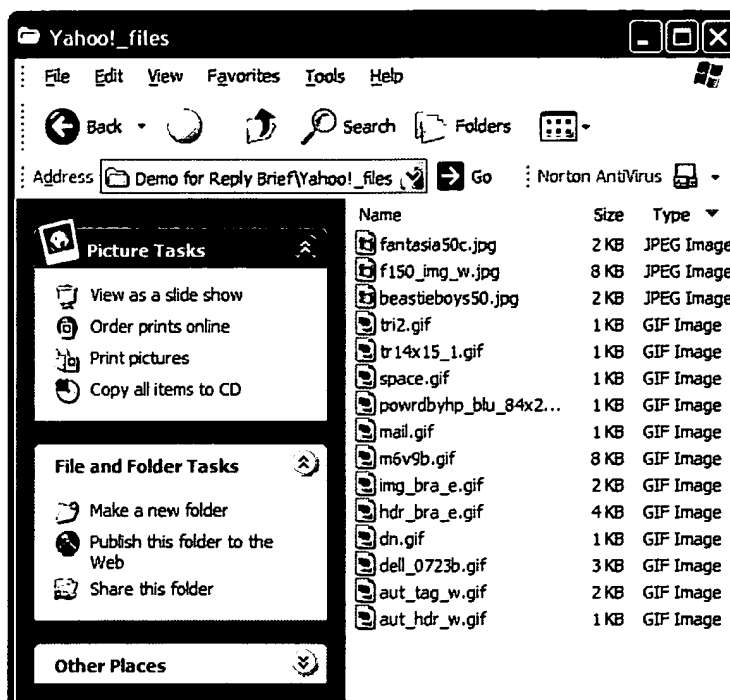
Initially, a sample web page (Yahoo.com) is shown below in Screenshot 1. It is noted that the web page includes a number of embedded graphics relating to advertising and feature articles. Screenshot 1 further illustrates that the web page may be saved to local storage (e.g., by selecting the "Save As" option from the browser's "File" menu). In this case, the web page was saved in a directory labeled "Demo for Reply Brief" as shown by the browser address bar as well as the file manager window that is also shown in the screenshot.



Screenshot No. 1

² The Background section of the present application similarly describes this prior art process at page 2, lines 12-23.

As shown in the above file manager window, the web page is saved as both a main HTML page (i.e., the file "Yahoo!.htm") and a separate directory containing the embedded files (e.g., the directory "Yahoo!_files"). Screenshot 2 below illustrates the contents of the Yahoo!_files directory.

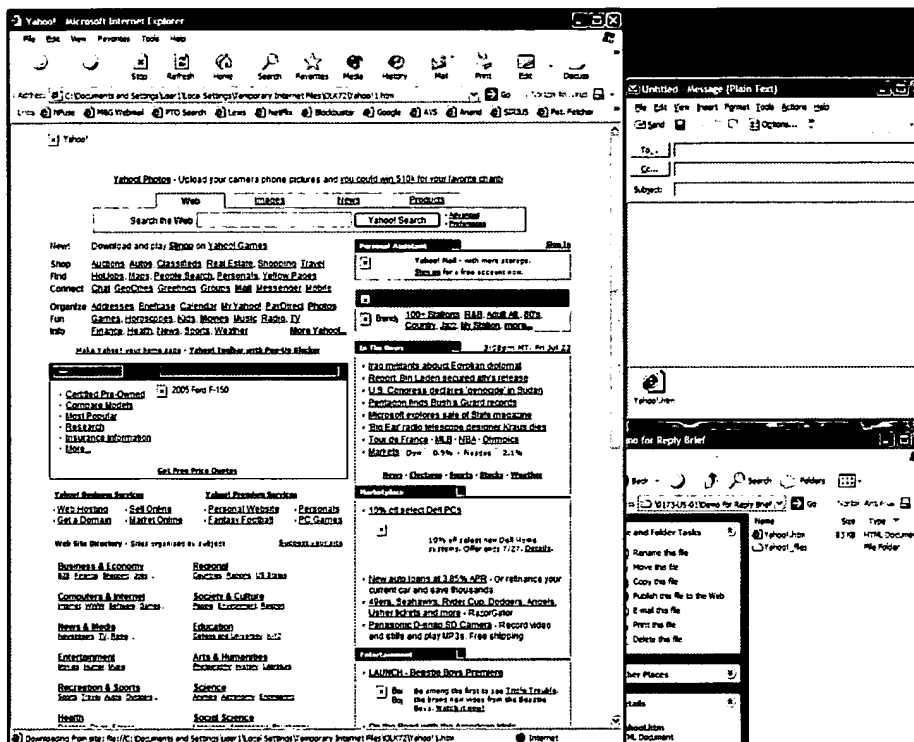


Screenshot No. 2

The "Yahoo!_files" directory shown above includes a number of image files that relate to the images shown in the main Yahoo! web page (for example, the file "f150_img_w.jpg" relates to the image of the truck that is prominently displayed in the middle of the web page). Thus, as noted in Mantha et al., the act of saving a web page does indeed create a self-contained directory that contains all the files needed to view the page. However, as shown above and as described in the specification of the present application (see page 10, lines 4-23), these files are stored with an internal directory structure that must be maintained when transferring the files to another via email.³

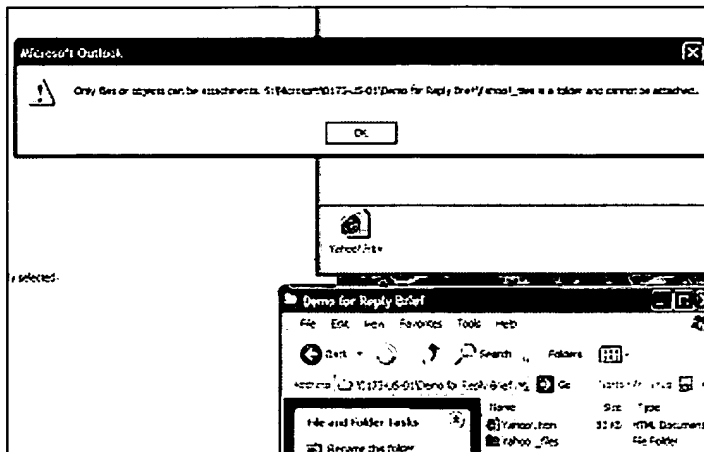
³ This is necessary to preserve the links within the saved web page. For example, the portion of the source code for the saved Yahoo web page that references the image of the Ford truck includes the following tag:
src="Yahoo!_files/f150_img_w.jpg"

If a user were to attach only the main HTML file to an email message (as shown in Screenshot No. 3 below) without also attaching the supporting files found in the “Yahoo!_files” directory, a recipient of the email note would receive a stripped down version of the web page without any of the graphics found in the original web page (compare Screenshot No. 3 below with Screenshot No. 1 above).



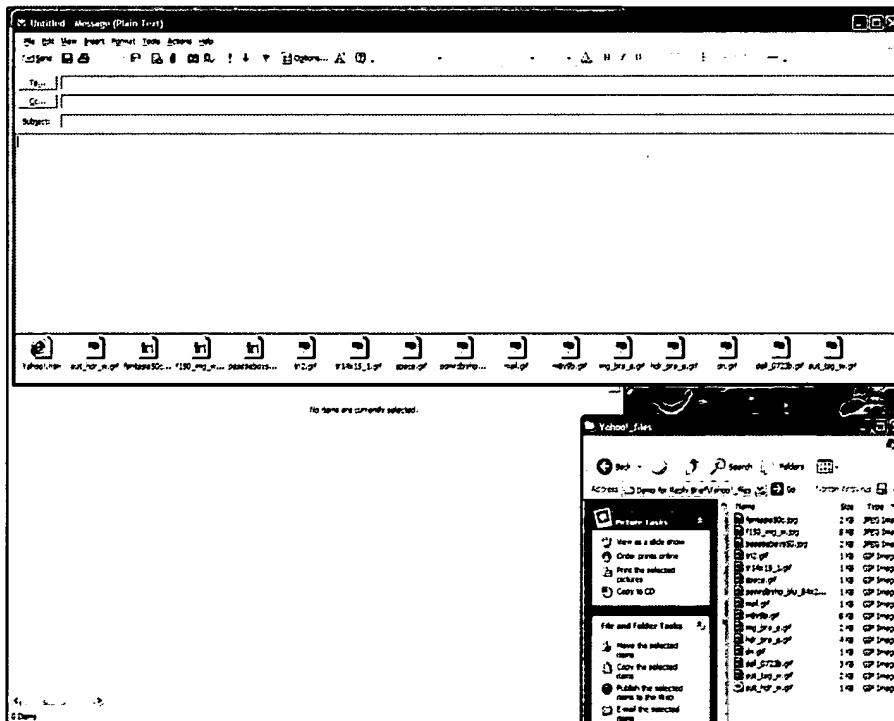
Screenshot No. 3

Thus, although the files necessary for a full reconstruction of the web page are “self-contained” in a directory, it is not possible with conventional email programs to include those files as a “single attachment file” as recited in claim 1 of the present application. Indeed, if a user were to attempt to attach a directory to the email message (e.g., the “Yahoo!_files” folder containing the embedded graphics files), the user would be notified that it is not possible to attach the directory, as shown in Screenshot No. 4 below. Specifically, the error message notes that “Yahoo!_files is a folder and cannot be attached.”



Screenshot No. 4

While it is not possible with conventional email systems to attach the saved web page as a “single attachment file,” it is possible to transfer all the necessary files in a single email message. This would necessitate attaching both the main HTML document and all the embedded or linked files that are referenced in the main web page, as shown in Screenshot No. 5 below.



Screenshot No. 5

Indeed, the oft-cited paragraph from column 13 of Mantha et al. essentially describes the situation shown in Screenshot No. 5 above. That is, because all of the files for the saved web

page are contained in a central location, it is a relatively simple process to attach the files to an email message (e.g., after attaching the main HTML document, a user need only select all the files in the “Yahoo!_files” directory and drag them to the email message window as shown in Screenshot No. 5). However, while both the description in Mantha et al. and the above screenshots illustrate the ease of attaching the contents of a directory to an email, they both fail to disclose or suggest packing an entire web page as a “single attachment file” as recited in the pending claims. In particular, a recipient of the above email would be required to save all of the attached files in a separate directory on their local system while recreating the specific directory structure shown in Screenshot Nos. 1 and 2 above in order to maintain the relevant links found in the main page. (See footnote no. 3 above.)

III. Conclusion

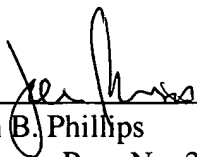
The above screenshots illustrate the problems associated with prior art methods for emailing the contents of a web page. Claim 1 of the present invention overcomes these problems by reciting the step of “packing the selected file and the at least one resource file into a **single attachment file** and attaching the attachment file to the email note.” (Emphasis added.) This invention is not shown in the above examples nor is it described or suggested in Mantha et al. Indeed, as described in greater detail in Applicant’s opening brief, Mantha et al. simply notes that once a web page has been saved within a self-contained directory (e.g., the directory “c1”), the files within the directory (e.g., the files “c1.htm, i1.jpg, etc”) may be transferred with an email message by attaching “a copy of the **directory contents** to the e-mail” so that “all embedded files get transferred.” Col. 13, lines 42-46. However, contrary to the statements within the Examiner’s Answer, Mantha et al. does not describe packing the various web page files into a “single attachment file” so that a recipient may simply click on the single file in order to view the fully reconstructed web page. Furthermore, the statement in the Answer that the claims read on the self-contained folder described in Mantha et al. (because a file directory “is a type of file”) is simply incorrect since the specification of the present application clearly distinguishes this type of interpretation. See page 2, lines 9-19; page 10, lines 4-23; and page 16, lines 26-32.

It is earnestly solicited that the Examiner and/or the Board carefully reconsider the pending claim rejections in light of the Mantha et al. patent, particularly since Mantha provides only a general description of saving the contents of a web page in a single directory and then emailing the **contents** of that directory to a user as shown above. The techniques described in Mantha et al. are well known by those skilled in the art and serve only to demonstrate the cumbersome nature of emailing saved web pages - which is the precise problem that is addressed by the present invention. Reversal of the Examiner's rejections of claims 1-35 is therefore respectfully requested.

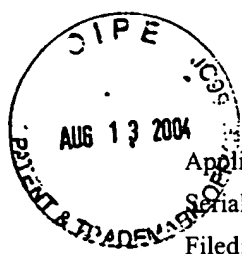
Due to the straightforward nature of the issues presented in the appeal, Applicant does not request an oral argument.

Date: August 13, 2004





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